

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge receipt of the Examiner's Office Action dated April 2, 2008 as well as Examiner's Advisory Action dated June 16, 2008.

Claims 1-6 are pending in the application.

Claims 1-6 stand rejected.

Claims 1, 3 and 5 have been amended.

Claims 13-26 have been added.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as purportedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention due to the purported fact that "[c]laims 1, 3, and 5 recite 'without any user input subsequent to the activation of the second button.'" See Final Office Action, p. 2. However, as shown in the above listing of claims, claims 1, 3, and 5 fail to recite this limitation. For at least this reason, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of this rejection.

Rejection of Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being unpatentable over Vance et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,442,526 ("Vance"). See Final Office Action, p. 3. Applicants traverse this rejection based upon the existence of a number of infirmities.

No Teaching of a User-Selected Activity Type

First, the Final Office Action cites Vance 8:66-9:10 in support of the proposition that Vance discloses “establishing a user-selected activity type for the created activity item.” *See* Final Office Action, p. 3. However, Vance 8:66-9:10 fails to even mention a user-selected activity type.

Vance 8:66-9:10 states:

Now turning to FIG. 10, a detailed block diagram of the expense reporting 80 from FIG. 3 is illustrated. The create expense form process 274 provides secured access to the expense forms, autofills the forms with data from the employee profile table 94 and allows the traveler 86 to construct an expense report semi-automatically as well as by pulling stored data from the trip table 128. The create expense form process 274 imports data from the expense category table 168, the expense policy table 174, and the travel policy table 98, and provides this information to the traveler 86 so that the traveler 86 can construct a policy compliant expense report.

Thus, Vance 8:66-9:10 discusses aspects of Vance’s expense reporting and fails to teach the establishment of a user-selected activity type. In fact, Applicants are unable to identify any disclosure in Vance that is even remotely comparable to this limitation.

This comes as no surprise, as a distinction between Vance and the instant invention (among others) is that Vance is only able to generate expense reports for travel activities, while the instant invention allows for the generation of expense reports for multiple types of activities. Vance therefore neither provides, nor recognizes any need, to discuss the existence or use of an activity type (whether selected by a user or otherwise).

In addition to the Final Office Action’s citation of Vance 8:66-9:10, the Advisory Action further cites Vance 12:54-67 in support of the assertion that “[a]s per claims 1, 3, and 5, the user-selected activity type is shown by: The traveler selects New Expense Report icon 450 or Modify Expense Report icon 452 from the Expense Report window

454 which shows the status of saved expense reports.” See Advisory Action, p. 1.

However, as with Vance 8:66-9:10, Vance 12:54-67 fails to mention or even acknowledge a user-selected activity type.

Vance 12:54-67 states:

Now turning to FIG. 16, which consists of FIGS. 16A-16M, which are diagrams of graphical user interfaces for creating an expense report as described above in reference to FIG. 10. The traveler 86 selects New Expense Report icon 450 or Modify Expense Report icon 452 from the Expense Report window 454 which shows the status of saved expense reports in an Expense Report Log window 456. Energizing the New Expense Report icon 450 or the Modify Expense Report icon 452 brings up the Expense Data Range window 458, from which the traveler 86 enters or the corporate database 18 autofills date, project and purpose of the trip/expense parameters. The traveler 86 then energizes the Okay button 460 to view the Air Item Detail window 462 from which the traveler 86 enters or the corporate database 18 autofills charge parameters for the selected city pair 464.

As can be seen, Vance 12:54-67 only discusses aspects of Vance’s expense reporting, and so fails to teach the establishment of a user-selected activity type. Again, Applicants note that they are unable to identify any disclosure in Vance that is even remotely comparable to this limitation and that this comes as no surprise since Vance, which deals only with travel activities, and in so doing, fails to contemplate a need for activity types.

No Teaching of a Predetermined Mapping from Activity Types to Expense Types

Second, the Final Office Action cites Vance 8:66-9:10 in support of the proposition that Vance discloses “consulting a predetermined mapping from activity types to expense types to automatically establish an expense type for the created expense item.” See Final Office Action, p. 4. However, it is clear from the above that Vance 8:66-9:10 fails to mention or even suggest a predetermined mapping.

This also comes as no surprise, as the invention of Vance is only capable of generating expense reports for travel activities. Vance therefore has no need to create or consult a mapping, particularly a mapping from activity types to expense types. Vance has only one activity type and one expense type. Vance therefore cannot be interpreted to show, teach or suggest either the deemed activity types or expense types, as these are plural in nature. Moreover, Vance cannot be said to show, teach or suggest any functionality associated with manipulating various activity or expense types, much less a mapping between these types (which are simply not contemplated by Vance).

No Teaching that a User-Selected Activity Type is Established, an Expense Item is Created, or a Pre-Determined Mapping is Consulted in Response to the Activation of the First Button

Third, the Final Office Action identifies one of the buttons on the top menu bar of Vance's FIGS. 15A-15G as the first button of claims 1, 3, and 5. (The Final Office Action does not indicate specifically which of these buttons is identified as the first button.) See Final Office Action p. 3. (Note that claim 3 actually refers to an "activity item creation button" instead of a "first button" but the Final Office Action doesn't address this distinction, and, for the sake of argument, Applicants will address the point made in the Final Office Action in this regard.) However, the Final Office Action cites Vance 8:66-9:10 in support of the assertion that Vance discloses the limitation of claims 1, 3, and 5 requiring "in response to each activation of the first button: . . . establishing a user-selected activity type for the created activity item." See Final Office Action, p. 3. This represents an infirmity with the rejection since Vance 8:66-9:10 discusses Vance's FIG. 10 which is "a detailed block diagram of the expense reporting 80 from FIG. 3," and Vance 12:54-13:30 makes it clear that the graphical user interfaces employed for the

creation of an expense report are those shown in FIGS. 16A-16M, not those shown in FIGS. 15A-15G. Thus, even if Vance 8:66-9:10 teaches “establishing a user-selected activity type for the created activity item,” a point Applicant does not concede (as made clear above), Vance 8:66-9:10 cannot teach that this occurs “in response to each activation of the first button.” The first button has been identified as one of the buttons on FIGS. 15A-15G, not as one of the buttons on FIGS. 16A-16M.

Since the Final Office Action similarly cites Vance 8:66-9:10 for the proposition that Vance teaches the limitations of claims 1, 3, and 5 requiring “in response to each activation of the first button: . . . creating an expense item[, and] consulting a predetermined mapping from activity types to expense types to automatically establish an expense type for the created expense item” (see Final Office Action, pp. 3-4), Vance fails for the same reasons to teach that “creating an expense item” and “consulting a predetermined mapping from activity types to expense types to automatically establish an expense type for the created expense item” occur “in response to each activation of the first button.”

Request for Reconsideration and Withdrawal

Thus, for at least the reasons given above, Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection against independent claims 1, 3, and 5 as well as against their respective dependent claims 2, 4, and 6. Note that despite the Advisory Action’s assertion that Vance 12:54-67 teaches a “user-selected activity type,” Applicants maintain their position that this rejection should be withdrawn, for at least the reasons stated above.

Request for Specific Information

If the Examiner continues to believe that the above discussed limitations, or any others, are taught by Vance or any other reference or combination of references, Applicants would be most grateful for more detailed guidance on the Examiner's interpretation of such references. The simple citation of figures or column and line numbers is insufficient for Applicants to understand the Examiner's reasons for rejection. Specifically, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner at least identify which objects in any such references the Examiner equates with (1) either the first button (for claims 1 and 5) or the activity item creation button (for claim 3), and (2) the predetermined mapping. Applicants further respectfully request that the Examiner identify which action(s) recited in any such references the Examiner equates with the actions of (1) establishing a user-selected activity type for the created activity item, and (2) consulting a predetermined mapping from activity types to expense types to automatically establish an expense type for the created expense item. Of course, Applicants would prefer a full analysis of any assertions made by the Examiner, but specifically request at least the above identifications in order to understand the assertions made by the Examiner.

CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, the application and the claims therein are believed to be in condition for allowance without any further examination and a notice to that effect is solicited. Nonetheless, should any issues remain that might be subject to resolution through a telephonic interview, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned.

If any extensions of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) are required in order for this submission to be considered timely, Applicant hereby petitions for such extensions. Applicant also hereby authorizes that any fees due for such extensions or any other fee associated with this submission, as specified in 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or § 1.17, be charged to Deposit Account 502306.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. G. Campbell, III', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Samuel G. Campbell, III
Attorney for Applicants
Reg. No. 42,381
Telephone: (512) 439-5084
Facsimile: (512) 439-5099